4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

621 other municipalities (Aguacatenango, Can-
632 cuc, Tenango, San Martin, Sivaca, Guaquitepec, and Bachajon). Petalcingo belongs to the municipality of Tila, where Chol is spoken. The reason for these heterogeneous municipalities is that, within the political constitution of the state, only communities containing a sufficient number of inhabitants may achieve the status of municipality; the rest are considered merely as agencies of the municipality to which they have been assigned.

18 Another cultural variation stems from its
177 ecological location. Communities of the
191 southern zone, which have good lands,
361 roads, mechanized transportation, and therefore greater contacts with the outside world, occupy a more advanced place in the process of acculturation, which is revealed by the scant number of monolingual Indian residents and by their better economic condition. Communities of the central zone, of irregular landscape and high demographic pressure, isolated, and without economic opportunities, are the poorest, most conservative, and most untrusting of the entire region. The northern zone has a high index of Indianness because of the number of those who do not know Spanish, but their economic condition is better than that of the central zone, because there is more opportunity to cultivate coffee and work on the plantations.

Historical Antecedents

175 I shall mention only the periods of greatest
177 social significance in the past four centuries.
648 The dates are approximate.

The period of the conquest, from 1524 to 1545, saw the most violent encounters and occasional skirmishes between Indians and Spaniards. The fortress of Chamula was taken by Captain Luis Marín in 1524, and four years later Ciudad Real (now San Cristobal de las Casas), destined to be the politico-religious center of the region, was founded.

The period of catechization and consoli-

[P. 197-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

175 177 648 [166] *dation of the Spanish dominance* lasted from 1545 (when Fray Bartolomé de las Casas arrived with 17 Dominican friars) until 1600. During this period a vast movement of population took place characterized by changes in location of some towns, reductions, and congregations.

During the entire 17th and early 18th centuries, the *period of slavery and royal land grants*, Indians were subjected to heavy tributes and to forced labor on the plantations and in transporation systems of the encomenderos, as *tememes* or carriers. Great caravans of 300–400 Indians at the command of 10 or 12 Spaniards, transported goods the 1000 km. from San Cristobal de las Casas to Veracruz. Many died from excessive loads and lack of food (B. Metzger, 1960, p. 19).

175 177 648 797 From about 1720 to about 1850 may be considered the *period of resurgence and autonomy of the Indian community*, when the system of royal land grants was suppressed, the Order of Dominicans was weakened, and Spanish authority became relaxed and even indifferent. Bishop Polanco sent a report in 1781 to the Royal Court of Justice of Guatemala, complaining of the abandonment of the Indians (Trens, 1942, p. 200).

> It is wondrous that in the town of Chamula, contiguous to Ciudad Real, Indians have need of interpreter to defend themselves or to beg for what they desire. So that they are as they were twenty years after their conquest, in such a state of blindness and ignorance they find themselves. In the town of San Andres, next to Chamula, there are many saints, old and indecent, whom I thought of burying; I did not do it because those evil souls say that they make them see clearly and alleviate their needs. I suspected a riot without having assistance. . . . Oh, my Lord, their audacity and shamelessness are such that they even come to command in the church, without respect for the priest. They hold to the idea that the third person of the Holy Trinity is the Sun, because, they say, it was thus taught to them by the old fathers.

[P. 198-A]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

175 177 648 797 The mistakes, lack of attention and pretensions of the Indians in regard to the Christian doctrine, who they say they know, and the ones instructed best in them, say as many heretic words as Christian, is consequence or necessary sequel of the lack of care in the secular and ecclesiastical government.

This situation became more and more acute owing largely to the political unrest which absorbed the attention of the authorities, unrest which culminated in the separation of Chiapas from Guatemala and in 1824 its incorporation with Mexico.

175 177 648 The next period, *invasion of lands by Ladinos*, extends from about 1850 to 1911, when the first sparks of the Mexican Revolution reached Chiapas. In this period Ladinos began to invade lands of the Indian communities by bribery or by force. Toward 1856 the Indians complained against the invasion of lands in San Martin, San Miguel Mitontic, San Pedro Chenalo, Cuncuc, and Tenejapa, but failed to halt Ladino inroads (Trens, 1942, pp. 274–75).

The history of recent times, from 1920 on, is marked by increasing support from federal authorities throughout the entire [178] republic. In the Tzeltal area progress has been slow but constantly improving (see LaFarge, 1940; Beals, 1951).

Ethnographic Studies of the Region

114 [101] In his first trip through the Mayance area in 1839 and 1840, Stephens (1841) visited the northern zone of the Tzeltal, from Ocosingo to Yajalon, going through Bachajon and Chilon.

Traveling the same route two decades later in the opposite direction, the French explorer Désiré Charnay recorded his impressions in a small book (1863).

In 1901 Frederick Starr (1902), from the University of Chicago, made a short visit to the region.

In 1925 Blom and LaFarge traversed from north to south a large part of Tzeltal territory, publishing their data in three chapters of their *Tribes and Temples* (1926–

[P. 198-B]

423 592 [184] In the most acculturated communities (Aguacatenango and Amatenango) individually held property is more general. The head of the house is the owner of the parcel and he can manage it as he pleases. Referring to Aguacatenango, B. Metzger (1960, p. 11) states that:

> In general, land is "owned"—that is, controlled—by the household; as long as the son lives with the father, he may speak of "his land," but in fact he works the land with his father, planting what and when his father de-
> [428] cides. The son who lives apart is usually given a piece of land by his father, and he acquires new land which he, in turn, will pass on to his sons at his death or, if he chooses, before

[613] [593] At this level the lineage concept has disappeared, and the only recognized connection is the father-son relationship.

423 Irrigated lands ("tierras irrigables"), however, in Aguacatenango and in Amatenango contain parcels belonging to private owners and parcels used in common, which are administered or given by the local authorities to be cultivated. Metzger (*ibid.*) informs us that: "Recently, land has been bought on the edges of the town by each of the two barrios for the exclusive use of their members, while in the irrigable area the holdings of members of the two barrios are separate and watered by separate canals."

[175] Ejido lands exist in almost all the region, distributed according to the Programa Agrario de la Revolución Mexicana since 1914 but in some communities not put into practice until after 1930. These lands are administered by the "comite ejidal" of each municipio, which gives to any individual who needs land the permission to cultivate it. These lands cannot be sold or transferred in any way, because they are considered common property.

421 586 Family land as well as the house and its equipment belong to the man. When a marriage is dissolved, the woman goes back to her parents without taking anything but

[P 212-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Revolutions have since destroyed the herds, and the town now has only a small local trade in sugar and rum.

All goods are transported on mule-back over bad trails. Main trails run to Yajalon, San Cristóbal las Casas, and Comitan. Minor trails connect with Tenosique in Tabasco, a ride of five or six days through uninhabited forests. Other small trails lead into the heart of the forests along the Usumacinta river, where there are a few mahogany camps, fourteen days distance on a good mule.

The Spanish Conquerors had quickly discovered the richness of the soil and taken possession of it. Therefore, we find but a few Indians around Ocosingo, save at the small town of Sivacá, entirely inhabited by Tzeltal-speaking Indians. From there we secured our labourers, who were summoned by the municipal president and worked for us at the regulation pay of 50 centavos per day. Ocosingo holds sway over the native towns of Sivacá, Tenango, Oschuc, San Martín, and Bachajon. The municipality commands the Indians for all kinds of work, and in many ways lives on what can be pressed from them. As a consequence, the good people of Ocosingo are anything but popular among the Indians, though it appears that the man then in charge, Señor Simon Leon, was quite friendly towards them, and therefore well liked.

Geologically, the Ocosingo Valley is a syncline, the valley bottom and the interior mountain ranges being of a coarse red sandstone, and the exterior ranges of limestone. The axis of the valley runs approximately N-80-W to S-80-E, and Ocosingo town is located at an altitude of 900 meters above sea level.

As we rode into the village, La Farge discovered a stone block, carved with hieroglyphs, set in the pavement of the sidewalk, an excellent reception for archaeologists.

Our first concern was to find quarters, which we located in a house on the corner of a street leading into the Plaza. Soon our equipment was unloaded, and while we unpacked, the Ladino guide we had acquired in Bachajon went to his house to order food for us.

The restaurant and meal were a surprise, though not pleasant. In a room with a rotten board floor, the plaster falling off the walls, and a huge box full of saints, we were served fried eggs and black beans by an old woman with a large goitre. Though nothing in the house appeared to be either particularly exclusive or clean, the Ladino family seemed to resent that we sat down at the table with our chief guide, the trusty old Indian, Lázaro, now called "Tata" by us.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

We have divided Maya history in two groups, the Old Empire and the New Empire. Of the history of the New Empire we know a considerable amount, but our knowledge of the Old Empire history is scant. We know the area in which it flourished as a whole, like knowing Greece without being aware of Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. Here in front of me lay one of the first hints of the subdivisions of the Old Empire. Knowledge will advance, and soon we shall be able to tell about the rise and decline of states and cities, to revive the history of the foremost people of ancient America.

Nearly due north across the valley lies the Campomtik pyramid. La Farge visited it while we worked at Toniná. It, too, is a remodeled mountain top, and as it is covered with grass, it stands out sharply against the forest-clad hills. It consists of a series of terraces with a depression which has stone-faced terraces and floor. From the valley bottom the hill rises 280 meters, of which 105 meters (325 feet) have been terraced. Broken pottery is found in various places on the hillside, and on the top now stands two wooden crosses, set there by the Indians. The name Campomtik means "much yellow incense." Incense was burned on the hilltop until quite recently. At such times they burned great fires, and shot off many rockets bought in Ocosingo. Finally the celebrations got too fervent for the Catholic Father, and he had the Indians driven away by the town officials. Generally, though, the Padres let the Indians alone when they celebrate in honour of the ancient gods (fig. 201).

Outside Ocosingo, where the trail divides, one going to Bachajon, the other to Sivacá, lies a group of mounds called Santa Teresa. Rumors that Indains had buried church treasures here after an uprising, led the townspeople to make a large excavation. According to some people in Ocosingo, they found a small wooden sanctuary, and a beautiful clay bowl with a fish on its lid. This bowl later was bought by Seler.*

It is remarkable how persistent are rumors of buried treasures. Every Ladino expects to find "dinero," money, in any mound, and they are usually sadly disappointed. Also, most of these people believe that we find money, else why should we dedicate so much time to our explorations? We had a case where one man offered to go fifty-fifty with us if we would explore a mound on his lands. The whole mound at Santa Teresa has been dug through, and it is told in Ocosingo that the excavators found, not money, but a small wooden sanctuary with a saint inside. We hear every day, when among the Ladinos and Mexicans, stories of church bells of solid gold, and cocks that crow at midnight on top of the mounds.

*Seler, E., 1901. Fig. 279.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

CHAPTER XV

THE NORTHERN TZELTAL TRIBES

Ever since leaving Zona Sala, we had been working in the country of the Tzeltal-speaking tribes who form an outpost of the Highland Indians. The Bachajon, of the Finca Encanto and Bachajon village, and the Indians of Ocosingo and the neighbouring valleys, living as they do, cut off from the outside world, strong in number, and of a rather independent disposition, gave us the first evidences of how little the Indian of the Chiapas Highlands has changed since the days before Columbus. The kings and priests are dead, the temples have been replaced by churches and Christian forms, but the Indians and labourers of today in many respects live the life that their humble forebears did five hundred years ago.

At this point, before describing our trip up into the true mountain country, it seems opportune to tell something of these people, their manners and customs. We did not have time to make an exhaustive study of any of them, but they were constantly with us as guides and labourers, and we passed through many of their villages. At El Encanto we had a chance to visit and examine the settlement of the finca's workmen, with the kind help of Señor Ciriaco Aguilar, who acted as interpreter and supplied us with invaluable information. Señor Arturo Tovilla helped us with the Linguistic Lists (see Appendix III), as well as describing many of the customs recorded in this chapter. Señor Aureo Cruz of Toniná dictated a Tzeltal Prayer and Conversation, which was analyzed with the help of Señor Manuel Bulnes of El Real. (See Appendix VI). In general it may be said that all the Spanish-speaking people with whom we dealt helped us in every way possible.*

The Bachajon (*Batcahon*) and Ocosingo Valley Indians are, as has been said, an outlying part of a large group living in the mountain country. They speak the Tzeltal language, belonging to that branch of the great Mayance stock more closely related to Maya. In the pine country of Chiapas they hold the largest share of land, occupying an irregular area running southeast from Simojovel to

*The written sources bearing directly on the ethnology of these people are very meager. Nuñez de la Vega (1702) gives the best account of the early religion; his section on Nagualism has been reprinted by Paniagua (1908) along with an important selection of other early sources. Licenciado Vicente Pineda (1888) in his account of the Indian uprisings, gives some information, together with the most complete linguistic material. He gives a native calendar, probably based on one published by Emeterio Pineda (1845). Of modern scientific works, Starr (1901 and 1903) has ethnographic material, and publishes the only physical measurements (1902). Seler (1898) goes into the calendar in detail. For comparative material Tozzer (1907) and Sapper (1925) have been our chief reliance. Sapper's "Nordliche Mittelamerika" (1897) was in constant use in the field for information on all subjects. Particular references are given as they occur. Prof. Rudolph Schuller kindly allowed me access to his manuscript material.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc

boulders with care. It still is broad in most places, and has reasonable grades. We climbed to a rather desolate upland of wind-swept grass with a few crooked trees. There was some traffic on the road. We passed a group of Tenejapeños going down to the hot country to carry sugar. The men were ragged and woolly, like those we had seen at Salto de Agua, and their women, in short blue skirts and white blouses gorgeously ornamented with gold and crimson silk, were remarkable for their very pink cheeks showing through dark brown colouring.

The town of Cancuc (*kank'uk*) lies on the rounded shoulder of a long ridge that juts up above the high moors commanding a tremendous view North, West, and South over a jumbled mass of mountain ranges, like a herd of great elephants shouldering away to the horizon. A wind blows day and night, the trees are small and stunted, and the general effect is one of bleakness and height. At an altitude of 1,440 meters, with the unresting wind, it is always cold. The highroad climbs from a ravine up into the village where a small plaza is laid out on a level place. On our left was the big, white church, still well preserved. Opposite it, the Cabildo surprised us, a neat building with tile roof and white columned portico, built in President Diaz' time. Round about were some tumbling and ruined huts, and behind, the village rose on rough terraces crudely faced with stone.

Cancuc has a stormy history. It was the center of the famous rebellion of 1712, the subject of Brinton's "Maria Candelaria."* According to Starr (1904) who passed through here, there is a tradition that the men's long hair, covering their ears, is so worn in memory of the clipped ears which their ancestors received at that time. Recently, there has been political dissension in the form of a dragging feud, and a series of small fights and murders has resulted in those left of the defeated party abandoning the village and setting up their houses in the bush. It is from this that one sees so many huts deserted and beginning to disintegrate, adding to the general cheerless aspect of the place.

We were well received at the Cabildo, where the village officials with their silver-headed canes turned up shortly to look us over. They were younger men than most of the officials we had met previously, and a pretty tough looking crew, much what one would expect of a group that had attained office largely by means of the machete. The people on the whole rather resemble the Bachajon physically, being of a small-limbed type with an average height for men of about 160 centimeters, and nearly beardless. The men wear tunics cut as at Tenango, but decorated with red and yellow em-

*Brinton, 1887; Pineda, 1888.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

tions of self will find a responsive audience only within these linguistic and physical boundaries. The sense of insulation is a denial of regional and national political institutions in which they interact with the other Indians and Ladinos who are part of their present world and share their history. The town itself is a product of the Spanish colonial *congregación,* which drew together diverse Indian populations that had been scattered in small settlements. The outlying barrios are occupied by Indians who have moved out from the center, as well as foreign Indians who had worked in the *fincas,* or large plantations, within the township. These latter people are referred to by a derisive term, *Kurik,* meaning roughly "country hick." Beyond these, and still within the municipal limits, there are a series of *colonias,* settlements populated by Indians who have moved here from other towns and by *mestizos,* or acculturated Indians. These settlers acquired land in the time of Juarez or later in the Cardenas period. Ladino men are called *Kaštan* and women *Šinlan;* foreigners who do not appear to be of the country are called *Alemán,* the Spanish term for German.

The focus of this book is on the lives and thoughts of people living within the center. The people of Tzo'ontahal live in a square world, surrounded by a round universe. From the square hole, cut in the earth at the center post of their square house to receive the sacrifice of a live chicken when the house is built, stretches a square village (it appears as a rectangle on the map, but they draw it as a square).[2] The fields are measured in squares of twenty-five arms' breadths, with five handspans measuring the square between each plant. Within this square world, they have elaborated techniques for dealing with spiritual and human co-residents in curing rituals, offerings for crops, burial practices, and baptism rites. Their present cultural stock reveals a selective absorption of Spanish colonial features along with twentieth-century innovations. They have techniques for planting and harvesting milpa, marketing the pottery manufactured in all the households, curing an eclipse of the moon, divining causes of illness and curing the maladjusted social relations which cause it, manufacturing and

2. This view of the world as square is shared by Tzeltal and Tzotzil neighbors in Larraínzar (Holland 1963:69), San Pedro Chenalhó (Guiteras Holmes 1961:254), and Pinola (Hermitte 1964). The four-direction concept of the village and world noted by Landa (Tozzer 1941:135) suggests a square-space concept.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

tóbal. The altitude above sea level varies from 2,000 meters in the hilly periphery to 1,720 meters in the valley where the town center is located. Ejido lands acquired in the 1930s have extended the boundaries of the township to lower lands at 1,500 meters altitude.

Pre-Conquest settlement patterns in the Chiapas highlands were characterized by independent communities occupying the headlands around flat-bottomed valleys (R. M. Adams 1961:341). The choice of sites seems to have been based on defense against invading Toltec or other conquest groups (Calnek 1962:25). The sites investigated by Adams and Culbert (R. M. Adams 1961:347) in Amatenango belong to the late-Classic and early post-Classic period. They were marginal to the centers of Maya civilization in the Yucatán peninsula and Guatemala. Test excavations in the modern town indicate that it was occupied only after colonial times.

The town of Amatenango del Valle is first mentioned in the year 1528 when it was included in tribute lists with both the Nahuatl name, Amatenango, and the Tzeltal name, Tzobontaghal (Calnek n.d.). The tribute lists of 1761 include 33 families in the *parcialidad*, or Spanish political unit based on an indigenous settlement, of Zacatepec in Amatenango and 75 families in the parcialidad of Amatenango (Trens 1957 I:217). The first census done in 1778 shows a total population of 576, with 374 men and 202 women. The racial breakdown is listed as 8 white, 2 negro and mestizo, and 560 Indians (Trens 1957:221). By 1824, the population had increased to 1,620. The present population of 3,179 represents natural growth as well as inclusion of additional outlying settlements added in the latter part of the nineteenth century and during the 1930s with the enactment of the land reform act. The population changes indicate steady but not great increases. The capacity of the town to incorporate additional population has probably passed its peak. The present trend is for out-migration to newly opened ejido lands.

The subdivisions of the town, which provide the framework for administration by the national government, are included in Table 1.

The center. The center of Tzo'ontahal is called the "center [or navel] of the world." The residents of the center, with the exception of the schoolteacher's family, are all Indian. Although the town center forms

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 5]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

A territorial distinction not recognized by the federal government is the division of the town center into two sections, or sides, by the street running in front of the church. The two sides of the division are called Ahk'olnantik, upper side, and Alannantik, lower side. The upper side is in the direction of higher lands in the southwest called Ahk'olk'inal, and the lower side is in the direction of lower lands to the northeast, called Alank'inal. The emphasis on relative altitude implicit in place nomenclature is a central fact in the Indians' ecological adjustment. Marriage is endogamous within each division by explicit rule, and in fact 87 percent of all marriages conform to the rule, according to a census I took in 1958. A man who marries a girl on the opposite side is forced to make a payment of eighteen liters of liquor to the bachelors of the opposite division. In addition to regulating competition for marriage partners, the dual division is the basis for allocating civil and religious offices.

Whether the dual division was an indigenous trait or not is a moot point. The pattern for dual organizations existed in both Spanish and indigenous societies (Foster 1951:5). There is some speculation that the dual divisions are a product of the Spanish colonial policy of the congregación, when populations of different origins were drawn together. However, local historical accounts indicate that several ethnic groups were introduced at various periods. After the initial congregación, foreign Indians were incorporated in the sixteenth century, in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Secretaría de Gobierno Constitucional, October 26, 1893), and as late as the 1930s in response to the land reform program. As each ethnic group entered the region, it was either incorporated into one of the existing divisions or was isolated. The persistence of polarization must be explained on other grounds. The widespread distribution in the Chiapas highlands of dual divisions defined by territory and descent in communities of both dispersed and nucleated settlement patterns suggests the indigenous origins of the division. A dual division of upper and lower sections based on endogamy and equal representation is found in San Pedro Chenalhó (Guiteras Holmes 1961:64), Chanal (Eva Hunt, NSF II report), Oxchuk (Villa Rojas 1946:424), and Cancuk (Siverts 1964). The Nahuatl term *calpul* is applied in some cases to these divisions. The towns where calpulles are found are *paraje*, or vacant center, types (Tax 1937) which

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

241 indicate these bases and assess the efficiency of the agriculturalists in allocating resources of labor, land, and seeds.

423 311 [175] *Land use.* The historical factor of the greatest significance in establishing the present economic position of the town was the act of possession of ejido lands in 1937. The first grant included 4,873.53 *hectares*[1] of land of the following categories:

irrigated flat land	139.77
non-irrigated plots	1,018.37
pasture	1,659.65
hill land	2,055.74

The high hill land with its cover of pine and scrub oak was set aside for use of all members of the community for hunting and gathering firewood. The pasture lands are similarly controlled by the civil authority for common use. The cultivable lands passed into the hands of 385 ejidatarios, each of whom received one-half hectare. A further grant in 1954 provided an increase of 2,578 hectares, including:

low mountain land	2,277.60
pasture land	300.40

423 178 The possession of land by individual small-plot cultivators reversed the trend toward large-scale commercial agriculture begun in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The land of the Indians that had been expropriated in the latter part of the nineteenth century by forced sales was to be held in the possession of the townspeople, "benefiting all with its products and uses" (Act of possession, 1937, Town Archives).

423 241 311 178 With the increase in ejido lands acquired in 1954, the share of each ejidatario has been increased to one hectare. This is usually split between low land in San Caralampio and high land in San Isidro and Tulancá, giving two growing seasons. The advantages of different growing seasons are that there is a more balanced work schedule and that there are two harvests, one in November and one in July. The ejido land grant has stabilized subsistence crop cultivation in the economy of the town and in-

1. A hectare is equal to 2.46 acres.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

highly stratified primitive society, which remains static: it lacks the flexibility and mobility that exists in modern societies.

The history of the ejido program in Tzo'ontahal in the first few years after it was organized in 1937 seemed to confirm this conclusion. Its immediate effect was to block the flow of labor and goods in the regional and national markets. The ejidatarios were no longer forced to sell their labor at the prevailing rate of 25 cents a day, a wage which was not enough to supply the needs of even one man much less those of a household. Children and women formerly had to work with their husbands in the coffee fincas in order to meet their most immediate consumption needs. The independence that the ejido tract gave meant that men could withhold their own labor and that of the subordinate members of the family from such exploitation. The second harvests coming from the ejido plots in low country freed the Indians from having to buy corn in July, August, and September at the inflated market prices which took advantage of the scarcity of this basic necessity.

The political effect of the ejido in the early days was to fortify the corporate community against the shocks of the outside world. The first lands acquired were primarily allotments of corporate lands alienated by the laws of 1856 and 1876. Populations remained in situ, whether they were foreign Indians working on the expropriated estates, or residential communities created in the sixteenth century as crown towns.

The township of Amatenango acquired its first ejido land grant in 1937. One of the early promoters of the ejido, a *revestido* Indian (one who has adopted western clothing) from Huistán who had been a laborer on one of the fincas within the township limits, threatened to become a rural *cacique,* or local boss, comparable to those who emerged from the agrarian revolt in the central plateau (Friedrich 1962). This leader was elected president, but during his term of office he was expelled because of his attempt to secure house plots in the center for himself and other Huistecan Indians residing in the barrio of Yetawitz (Chapter 9).

The stabilizing effects of the ejido in its earlier phase have been upset in recent years. As the population of the center expanded, new families migrated to the nearby barrios contiguous to the town center. These new set-

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

423 621 166 tlements were assigned to one of the two sections of the division in the center with an attempt being made to maintain a demographic balance. Incorporation of the new settlements was more effective in the case of the barrios than in the case of the colonias, which were farther away from the town center and included Indians of diverse communities. The process of • 175 423 621 661 159 breaking away from the old community is illustrated by the 1961 move for independence made by the original settlers of the colonia of Caralampio. The following account was given by a man who was then secretary of the ejido:

The first settlers of San Caralampio, José, Pablo, Luciano, and Santos were self-appointed principales, *or head men, of the colony. Santos and Luciano were from the town center, and José and Pablo had worked on the ranch when it was privately owned. The colony was well populated and the people lived well—there were no fights nor any problems. In 1956 the four principales decided that they should separate from the center. They told the people that if each person would contribute twenty-five pesos, they would raise the issue of the division in the* Departamento Agraria Mixta. *José invited Mateo, a man who knew how to read and write, to help them.*

"Let's divide from the town so that we alone will run the colony," he told them.

The principales took the money contributed and went to Tuxtla. There, in the Liga de Communidad Agraria *they asked for the separation, and were referred to the* Departamento Agraria Mixta. *When they arrived there with their request, the commissioner said that he would have to communicate with the chief in Mexico.*

After this, Pablo came one day to the center. He spoke to the ejido commission: "Look here, José, Luciano and Mateo went to Tuxtla."

"What for?" asked the ejido president.

"They asked for a division from the town."

"Que pendejo!" *said the president. "What happened?"*

"What do you think?" asked Pablo.

"We are against it. If it was a new center, we would support you. But

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

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we are against division," said the president. "How much did you have to contribute?" he asked Pablo.

"Twenty-five pesos. They told us if we do not give money, we will be thrown out of the colonia."

We advised him that it would be better not to continue giving money to the principales. "You can't make this division," we told him.

One Sunday all the pueblo united in a mass meeting. Everyone was present. People asked about the affair of San Caralampio, and the Ejido Commission explained to them what had happened. The people said, "Let's get rid of them [the four principales of San Caralampio]."

When the three principales returned to San Caralampio from Tuxtla they asked each household head to contribute fifty pesos in order to send them to Mexico to talk personally with the Chief of the Ejido Division. Pablo came the next day to talk to the president in the center and advised them that the principales had gone out. There was another meeting. The president's decision was to get a contribution of one peso from each person in the center so that they would have six hundred pesos to prevent the division. They feared that if this occurred the people of the center couldn't work down there.

When the leaders of the central Ejido Commission had received the money, they went to the departmental capital to explain to the chief of the ejido zone what had happened. They said that the leaders of the colonia had gone to Mexico.

"Let's to go work!" said the chief. "Did you bring the money?"

"Yes, we have six hundred pesos."

"Go to the bank and change it into one-hundred-peso bills," said the chief. "Let us send two hundred pesos to the chief of the division in Mexico so that he will prevent the division."

We sent the money airmail. Before the principales of San Caralampio had arrived, we had their way blocked. Our money went to work for us. In five days, the chief in Las Casas said the money had been well received, and the leaders of San Caralampio had not been received.

A week later, Pablo came to see how the affair had proceeded. We asked Pablo if he had contributed money. He said no. We told him,

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1987) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

175 423 621 661 159 *"Don't give any more money. The Ejido Commission won't let the division happen since we are the same pueblo."*

The four principales returned from Mexico. They said that they had a paper and that an engineer would come. They asked for another contribution of 25 pesos. They said that those who wouldn't pay would be thrown out. Pablo came and told us. We told him not to be afraid. The principales now knew that Pablo was with us. He had two brothers, Pancho and Ignacio, whom he advised not to go along with the principales since he knew that they would not win the case. When the principales returned to ask for more money for their trips to Tuxtla, both brothers refused.

175 423 621 661 682 159 *Since these three brothers did not cooperate, the principales got angry and decided to kill Pablo. One day, when Pablo was on his way to Teopisca, he was shot in the back. He continued riding 76 meters. The horse returned to his house. His wife ran to tell his two brothers that the horse had come home without a rider. The brothers ran out and found Pablo dead. The civil authorities of the town went. A few days passed. The brothers never asked for justice. But since they knew who did it, one of them took Pablo's 16-centimeter rifle. Pablo's wife had been thinking of selling it to pay for the expenses of the funeral. Pancho [Pablo's brother] said, "No wait. I will buy it as soon as I have money."*

He borrowed it for several years. One Sunday there was an order for all of the people of San Caralampio to go to the pueblo. They got up early and wakened all the others with a horn. Pancho got up with his rifle. He went to Juan's house and shot him. Luciano had Pancho jailed in the department capitol. He declared his crime, and said that he had killed Juan because the latter had shot his brother. He made a good statement. For this reason, he got out very cheaply—1500 pesos—which he paid with his crop of beans and corn. He was in prison in San Caralampio three months. Now he lives in Teopisca. His sons go to work there, but he doesn't. One day, Pancho was shot in the back—I don't know how many centimeters the bullet penetrated, but he did not die. The brothers of Juan and José have all left the colonia.

José was the one who caused all of the trouble. His wife was the younger sister of Pablo and she left him. Now José is going around begging for food to eat.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970

NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

by the company truck to replenish supplies they bring with them. Most of the workers are young men in their twenties and thirties. They return Saturday evening in a truck supplied by the company and go back to work on Monday morning. Weekly wage payments have upset the usual controls over budget management. Money earned from crops is handled by women. The sawmill workers have resisted passing over their paychecks to their wives or mothers, and several court cases have been precipitated as a result (Appendix 2b).

All of the work in which men are engaged outside of the community is voluntarily undertaken for cash compensation. Formerly, forced labor of two kinds was frequently demanded of the Indians: communal labor in the neighboring ladino town when Tzo?ontahal was an *agente municipal* of that town, and work in neighboring fincas for wages of 50 cents a day. Forced communal work came to an end when the town became an independent municipio in 1931, and the labor roundups at substandard wages were ended when Indians became conscious of their rights guaranteed in the *Ley Federal del Trabajo* in the late 30s. Copies of the *Colección Jurídica Ley Federal del Trabajo* are sold in the departmental marketplace along with the *Codigo Agraria*. Awareness of their rights as workers is concomitant with increasing entry into wage labor employment outside of the local community. As yet, Indians do not have any organized labor interest groups to champion their rights. The Commissioner of Indian affairs in the departmental capital is an intermediary in individual cases that arise. But wage levels and conditions of work are set in a free market in which the Indian's only control is to refuse to work.

The few special occupations in the town, such as butchering, caponizing, weaving bags, carpentry, and midwifery, have never developed into full-time professions.[2] The failure of the development of specialization is related to the tradition of ritual offerings of gifts of liquor and consumables and to the lack of a marketplace in the town.

Most of the livestock raised in the town is sold to butchers of the neighboring town because of lack of storage or of market facilities for the meat. Pigs and bulls are slaughtered in town only on the occasion of a celebra-

2. Curing is treated in a separate chapter since it is an exceptional case of specialization related to social control.

Chapter 7

The Formal Organization of Local Government

The formal organization of civil and religious offices in Tzo'ontahal is based on the pattern of a locally independent, democratically elected officialdom introduced by the Spaniards. Variations in the pattern from that of other towns of the highlands have resulted from differences of interpretation of the functions, the range of power, and the course of succession of offices. This flexibility has preserved structural continuity as organizational adjustments are made. The Indians have transformed an alien governing mechanism into one that meets their changing needs and contributes to their independence in the modern world.

The independence of the local township has a base in the pre-Conquest social organization of Chiapas. Robert Adams (1961:347) has noted the absence of architectural or other features indicative of functional specialization that would arise in a politically integrated region. At the time of the Conquest, Chiapas was divided into warring principalities, revealing the extreme political fragmentation of the area (Calnek 1962:8). Each town was divided from the neighboring town by *mojones*, hilled-up boundaries (ibid:36). A minimum of political unity was achieved by holding certain towns subject to the dominance of others (ibid:27); local autonomy persisted, however, in the administration of landholding as a community enterprise.

During the colonial period the Spanish Crown established the independence of towns directly under their control and provided them with a civil-religious hierarchy which has persisted as the form of government to the present (Carrasco 1961: Wolf 1957b).

Comparative studies of the civil-religious hierarchy indicate the range of

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

796 182 829 tions betray the intent. As he is hauled up by ropes and hung from the bell tower "to show the world that he killed Christ," the mayordomos on the ground who are assisting those up in the bell tower jab him with long poles. In this horseplay they symbolically castrate him: I heard one mayordomo say, *"Me?ʦunun,"* (transvestite) as one well-directed blow struck Judas. On Saturday, he is let down and given a ride on horseback around town. Formerly riding a horse was the prerogative only of Ladinos in the department of San Cristóbal Las Casas (Colby and Van den Berghe 1961). Placing Judas on a horse possibly has a symbolic value in identifying him as one of the hated dominant group who asserted this privilege.

[794] [756] [754] As he rides around town, the mayordomos solicit gifts from the people. Everyone gives fruits except the curers, who donate money. This transaction may indicate an obligation they feel toward Judas as one source of their power over witchcraft-derived illnesses. The money is used to buy liquor, called the "washing of the arms and legs of our Lord Eskipulas." The drinking is mandatory for all the mayordomos who have participated in the hanging of Judas.

The Judas figure, which was the church's symbol of the hated Semite, is made to appear as the enemy of the Indians, the Ladino. He symbolizes the sexual license of Ladinos with Indian women, the oppression of Indians by Ladinos, and the killer of Christ. In retaliation, the Indian symbolically castrate and hang him, and finally burn his body, thus dramatically vanquishing the alien in their midst. So far as I know, the priest is unaware of the identification Indians make between the Jew and the Ladino. He prevented the ride from taking place the year I witnessed the Easter Week ceremonial on grounds that it was a pagan ritual; when he left town on Sunday, the mayordomos took Judas on his customary rounds.

[793]

796 796 182 829 [181] [782] [175] The attitude toward Jesus, as the hero of the morality play, is ambivalent. Martyrdom is not the way to win in Indian society. The feeling is that power goes to the one who makes the sacrifice, and since Jesus was a Ladino sacrifice, they have more power than the Indians. During the Caste War in Chiapas in 1868, the Indians crucified an Indian youth in the hope that they would find a savior as powerful as Jesus. To this day, Indians of To?ontahal seem not to identify Jesus as one of themselves,

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

342 796 [584] [755] [128] party to go to the spring, at least one relative remains in the house to greet the soul if it should precede the curing party.

Behavior in household rituals is described in Chapters 1, 5, and 8.

The Cabildo

344 [196] [175] The cabildo, called by the people of the town the "cold house," [1] was built following the revolution of 1915, when Piñeda's revolutionary soldiers destroyed the original colonial structure. The tiles of the roof were confiscated from a finca which the Indians invaded in 1941 in an unsuccessful attempt to gain additional lands. When they were unable to maintain their hold on the land, they burned the owner's house and took the tiles to the town center where they remain as a symbol of their defiant action. They refer to this event with pride. The cabildo houses the jail, equipped with a barred wooden door, in one of its wings, and the Ejido Commission office in the other.

344 352 621 554 576 [693] Within the cabildo, each official has his established place. The cabildo is furnished with a table at which the president and síndico sit on wooden chairs made in the Indian town of Chamula. Four benches lining the walls on either side of the entry provide seating for the civil officials. On the right side (looking out at the plaza) sit the judges in order of rank; the regidores, in similar sequence follow them. The principales, and formerly the alfereces, sit on the left side when they appear for ceremonial occasions. This spatial allocation establishes drinking and greeting order as well. Visitors can go directly from one to another in the formal greeting of a handclasp and murmured "good morning, father," or "good afternoon, father," without violating age-respect patterns.

344 352 695 [625] During court cases, the claimant and his supporters sit on the bench to the left of the door; on other occasions the bench is occupied by visitors or petitioners. The police sit on one of the two benches lining the outside wall, or retire to the kitchen, a wooden slat lean-to on the left wing of the

[171] 1. Bunzel (1952) notes that in prayers, the cabildo in Chichicastenango is referred to as "the cold house, the icy house." Although the Quiché term is not given in her manuscript, one can see a similarity in the rhyming couplets and metaphorical allusions in the prayers of the towns.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Women work steadily at making pottery. Older girls help with household tasks from the time they are six in order to permit their mothers to make pottery. They bring the water from the faucets installed at every other corner of the streets in the center, degrain corn, and when they are about ten years of age assist in grinding corn or bring the cooked corn to the mill. In three-generation families, the older woman tends to the tasks of preparing the meals while the younger women make pottery.

The men work uninterruptedly at agricultural tasks, taking only a noon break to eat a lunch of tortillas, coffee, and sometimes beans. During periods of intensive activity, women or children bring a hot lunch to the fields. At about three-thirty they return home, sometimes stopping to collect firewood along the way. When they arrive home, there are no greetings. They deposit their loads of harvested crops, firewood, or *zacate* (leaves and grasses to pack pottery). The children pick these up and bring them into the kitchen with no words spoken. The men sit on the bench of the porch, sometimes assisting their wives with degraining, and "rest their heart" until supper is served about six o'clock. The final task of the day is cooking the nixtamal for the following day's meals. The family retires about eight o'clock.

The weekly scheduling of household celebrations indicates the thorough absorption of the Catholic calendar into the social schedules of the town. The choice of Saturday and Sunday for most household celebrations is geared to a week in which Sunday is a day of rest.

Other significant days of the week are Thursday and Friday. Thursday is thought to be the day when "the earth is open." House curing fiestas are scheduled on this day since the earth of the house floor can receive its gift of liquor. This is also the appropriate day to visit the caves to ask for crops and cattle, or to make payment with candles. Friday has a sacred quality because of the crucifixion, but except during Holy Week and Lent the townspeople ignore any proscription on eating meat.

The Annual Cycle

The annual ceremonial cycle of religious rituals and life crisis events establish the pattern by which the people schedule their economic activities. Since the township gained dependence in 1931, there is no forced labor on

175 632 466 communal projects for the neighboring town as there had been formerly. The peasant is master of his own time.

125 221 512 Tables 33 and 34 summarize the number of days and percentage of time accorded to various activities for men of two households. The first family consists of a man forty-three years of age and his wife. All of their own children died in infancy, and an adopted daughter recently left home to live with her husband and child in a new ejido plot. The second family consists of a man, his wife, two adult sons, and an unmarried daughter. In this family, the father of sixty-five is retired and his two sons perform all of the agricultural work. Table 34 includes only the activities of the sons. 125 221 The two schedules provide some contrasts:

461 462 561 1. The forty-three-year-old man has many more ceremonial obligations than the youths. This is a factor related to the life cycle in which men over thirty-five years of age are involved in more familial and community celebrations. During the year this schedule was taken, the man was serving as a mayordomo.

2. The older man has fewer productively employed days than the youths (only 54 percent of his time is spent in productive activities) in contrast to 76 percent and 79 percent for the youths). The difference is accounted for by wage employment the youths have undertaken. In order to pay for the cost of betrothal, the elder son worked 56 days (37 percent of the time accounted for) in a neighboring sawmill.

3. The youths were not involved in any exchange labor arrangements; until they become independent heads of households working their own fields, the men do not contract reciprocal exchanges.

221 461 462 796 The fact that men spend only 54 to 79 percent of their time (using these tables to provide minimal and maximal limits) on productive activities means that there is a great deal of flexibility in the use of time for ceremonial responsibilities. Everyone takes an average of twenty days off for celebrating fiestas in addition to fifty-two Sundays.

241 461 [796] The high proportion of time spent in family or communal ceremonials suggests the high value placed on them. The preference for leisure to pursue these activities is proved in cases such as that in which the additional profit in cultivating cabbages was not sufficient to motivate one agricultur-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 316]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

support for cultural independence as economic interdependence grows.

3. *The stability of the society varies directly with the effectiveness of its procedures for transforming old power positions into ceremonial posts.* The community demonstrated the effectiveness of its technique of cooling off old power-holders as new leader usurped the authority of the principales. The struggle going on between the curers and the new civil leadership had not been resolved in ceremonial absorption of the curers' power when I left the community. The community was ridding itself of these fear-provoking agents of the supernatural by resorting to homicide. The loss of the institution of the alférez marked the waning of these old techniques of ceremonially incorporating leadership into a traditional hierarchy and linking civil office with religious obligations.

4. *The lability of the society varies directly with the gap between expectations and experience.* The Indians condition themselves to expect the worst and so are not disappointed by it. They pray only that they may maintain a given level of suffering and poverty. They are not caught up in that revolution of rising expectations that makes for discontent when experience does not match them. The Indians know they are better off than they were, and they contrast their present prosperity with the famine of 1915 when revolution and banditry depleted their crops and cattle, and with the typhoid epidemic of 1928 when hundreds died and the rest did not have the money to bury them properly. An attitude of pessimism about the future limits the problem of adjusting to it or of making adaptations to improve it. One could predict neither revolution nor moral collapse.

5. *The lability of the society varies directly with the degree of dissonance between traditional and contemporary interpretations of events.* The old explanations are still applied to current events. Disaster is blamed on individual or communal failure to carry out ceremonials. Sickness and death are attributed to witchcraft motivated by envy or malice. The paranoic theories of human nature are confirmed by every illness or death that occurs. Even the gods are characterized as envious and vindictive. Containment of blame for misfortune within the community minimizes the political involvement of Indians in the wider society and limits the changes that might affect them.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

172 the density of occupational refuse suggests to him that the populations were concentrated on the hill sites themselves.

During the Post Classic period the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were apparently unoccupied. This correlates with a shift in the total settlement pattern of the area, from small well defended valleys to large, more strategic positions such as the ones on the Plateau Summit of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Ethnohistory

175 Historical documents tend to confirm that the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were not occupied by any large nucleated settlements upon the arrival of the Spaniards. They do not appear in the first accounts of the Conquistadores. The earliest reference to Amatenango is 1586 and to Aguacatenango 1605, perhaps indicating that the former inhabitants were reducidos (concentrated in villages by the Spaniards) somewhat earlier. These first references occur in connection with grants of encomienda (i.e., they were tributaries of a Spanish lord, or Encomendero) (Simpson, L., 1929:1950).

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648 Both communities were formed, as far as we can tell from the scanty evidence in the primary sources, by the Spaniards, in agreement with the policy of reducciones (concentration of population in villages) of the encomiendas initiated in the sixteenth century (Calnek, 1961, Appendix III). Each one of these settlements was formed of two separate pueblos, one incorporated within the other, which later appear in other documents as parcialidades.

175 Thus, the village of Aguacatenango was created by joining the
361 parcialidades of Aguacatenango and Quesaltepec, while Amatenango
621 was composed of the parcialidades of Amatenango and Sacatepec.
648 It is not possible at present to identify more closely the social groups that the Spaniards called parcialidades.

[797] It is probable that each parcialidad was composed of several lineages and clans, but up to the present time no one has done a comparative study of name distributions on available censuses or other similar materials, nor has any record been found, which explains the procedures used by the Dominican Friars (who controlled the reducciones in the area) when they reorganized
175 the populations of the territory.[1] In central Mexico the term
197 parcialidad refers, in the primary sources, to the four divisions
621 of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Capital, but they also refer to the
175 barrios or calpuls (Caso, A., 1959). In Chiapas it is normally
621 used to mean the sub-divisions of pueblos reducidos. It is known,
648 however, that the parcialidades were originally separate groups of people which were independent social units. Even after the reducciones they kept important elements of their organization separate, including their political officers, who were responsible for complying with demands made by the Spaniards for tribute and labor. Some of the separate political functions have been re-
174 tained up to the present. It is also safe to assume that each one
621 of the parcialidades was an endogamous group; both Aguacatenango

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[1] The new documents are still unavailable. They have been reported by Edward Calnek in the National Archives in Guatemala, and by Dr. Vicenta Cortez in the Madrid Archives, Spain.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango .
Aguacatenango

197 The inhabitants of both villages speak closely related dialects of the Tzeltal language, one of the two groups forming the Tzeltal-Tzotzil, which split linguistically from the parent stock of the Mayan Family around the beginning of the Classic Period of Maya Civilization (McQuown , 1959).

Lexicostatistical counts and isoglosses show that the two communities cluster together, in dialect cores of less than 500 years of separation, as against several others in the study area of the Chiapas Project of the University of Chicago. Several indices were used for the count, including degree of Spanish borrowing (McQuown, 1956; 1959). They indicate the same degree of linguistic acculturation.

191 At present Tzeltal-Spanish bilingualism is common, perhaps with the exception of elder women, although the Spanish spoken is mainly "market-Spanish" and reduced in vocabulary.

Demography

•175 621 166 During the Colonial Period and the Independence both villages remained stable, being endogamous, economically self-sufficient communities with fairly restricted ranges of territorial movement; this is in contrast with the present day situation in which settlements tend to split into separate communities through local migrations (McQuown et al., 1959, Section 2, Part I, page 6).

175 161 A comparison of censuses available for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suggests a high degree of demographic continuity with a slow, steady increase in population, although there is some evidence of population declines which took place in the

175 161 area as a result of recurring epidemics. It has taken 180 years for the villages to double their population while Mexico as a whole has tripled it in 144 years, from 1793 to 1937 (Simpson, W., 1937: 149).

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHY: POPULATION INCREASE

Year	Amatenango	Aguacatenango
1778	576	568
1958	1,337	1,034

621 166 More recently both communities have sent out some of their population to form colonias (small dependent settlements) in their rural periphery. Amatenango has formed four separate rural barrios (La Grandeza, Madronal, Yetahwitz and Patzhwitz) situated within view of the town, and two colonias (San Vicente and San Caralampio). Aguacatenango now has one colonia, called El Puerto. Most of its inhabitants are related to those of Aguacatanango; they moved down to El Puerto in the last thirty years, after the community lands had been expanded in that direction.

Political History

175 648 During Colonial times and the Independence period both villages shared the same types of relations with the outside world; these were mainly the payment of tribute in kind and services to the Spanish and Ladino (Local Mexican) authorities.

When first mentioned, the villages appear to have been

175 648 under the administrative jurisdiction of the Provincia de los Llanos.[1] They were, and still are, part of the same Curato of [793] the local Catholic Church, which was under secular clergy, as opposed to most villages in the area which were under Dominican jurisdiction. Up until 1854 they were subjected to the same changes with respect to the administrative districts of the State of Chiapas (districts which were rearranged practically every time 175 there was a change of government). In 1854, however, the local 621 districts were reorganized into Municipalidades (the closest 648 English equivalent being a county); Amatenango became attached to 631 Teopisca, the nearest Ladino-Indian town, as a part of the ninth Municipio, while Aguacatenango became dependent upon the fourth Municipio of Comitan, together with the towns of San Bartolomé (also a mixed Ladino-Indian town), Totolapa and Concordia (Trens, 1942).

631 621 At the present time Amatenango is an independent Municipio, having been separated from Teopisca in 1937, while Aguacatenango is an Agencia of the Municipio of Venustiano Carranza. Both com- [692] munities are, however, attached to the equivalent ladino towns in [651] similar ways because of their economic dependence, because such disputes as are not solved within the confines of the village are sent to the juzados of the towns, and because the offices of the Tax Collectors and Ejidos are situated in these ladino towns.

175 669 621 631 Neither of the two communities became directly involved in the Indian Uprisings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

[1] San Bartolome de los Llanos; today known as Venustiano Carranza.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

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169 called by the historians the Wars of the Castes (Pineda, 1888;
621 Molina, C., 1934; Kline, H., 1960), and both of them voted to join
631 Mexico when the State of Chiapas was contemplating annexation to either Mexico or Guatemala (Trens, 1942:274).

TABLE 2

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631 AMATENANGO AND AGUATENANGO: POLITICAL AND
621 ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS

Time	Amatenango	Aguacatenango
1600 to 1778	Obispado de Ciudad Real Provincia de los Llanos	
1829	Departamento del Sur Partido de los Llanos	
1844	Distrito del Centro Partido de Las Casas o San Cristobal	
1854	Municipio de San Cristobal 9th Municipio	Distrito de Comitan 4th Municipio
1937-1958	Municipio de Amatenango	Municipio de V. Carranza

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177 In the end of the eighteenth century (1792) the Bishop
286 Francisco Gabriel de Olivares y Benito tried to specialize Amatenango, Teopisca and Aguacatenango as small textile centers (cotton) by giving the weaving materials to widows and young female children to process and sell. A school for the training of weavers
[874] was established in the same year, but the project ended unsuccessfully in the beginning of the nineteenth century (Trens, 1942: 175-6).

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

The Social Setting of the Villages

Introduction

621
121 The villages of Aguacatenango and Amatenango can best be described as corporate peasant communities, following Eric Wolf (1955: 452-71).

First of all, the villages are small, independent social systems, with clearly defined geographic and social boundaries, "in relation to both outsiders and insiders" (Wolf, 1955:456).

The Land

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423 In the spatial dimension, the main characteristic of the villages is that they lay claim to a territory, a land base over which they hold exclusive rights of usufruct, and which has clearly demarked geographical dimensions. The rights over this territory are communal rights, every villager being a co-owner of the community territory, in the sense that membership in the village gives to a man the rights of usufruct of land within the village boundaries.

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[174] We do not know what the characteristic features of the pre-hispanic land tenure system of the Tzeltal-Tzotzils were. At the beginning of the Spanish occupation of the area, the Indians were relocated in villages and assigned to a particular encomendero and encomienda. (The encomienda was an institution by which a Spanish lord was assigned a number of villagers from whom he had the right to collect services and tribute.) At the same time, the villages were allotted land of two kinds: municipal, administered by the town officials and used to pay taxes and tribute to

the encomendero and the Church; and communal, which contained the woodland, pasture, and the site of the village itself.

> Several considerations may have promoted [the Spanish] Crown policy toward [the creation of] such communities. First, the corporate community performing joint labor services for an overlord was a widespread characteristic of European economic feudalism. In trying to curtail the political power of a potential new landholding class in the Spanish colonies the Crown took over management of Indian communities in order to deny the conquerors direct managerial control over labor. The Crown attempted to act as a go-between and labor contractor for both peasant community and landowner. Second, the corporate community fitted well into the political structure of the Spanish dynastic state, which attempted to incorporate each sub-cultural group and to define its radius of activity by law. This enables the Crown to marshal the resources of such a group as an organized unit, and to impose its economic, social and religious controls by a type of indirect rule. Third, the corporate structure of the peasant communities permitted the imposition of communal as well as individual burdens of forced labor and taxation. (Wolf, 1955:457.)

Independent Mexico inherited from the Spanish Empire these communities, and although at some time or other modifications of the over-all political structure have been proposed, the communities have persisted through the last century with basically the same makeup, and without having changed much in terms of their social structure or their cultural content.

In other areas of Mexico where urbanization and a more industrial society has developed, or where it was possible to mechanize agriculture, the corporate community quickly gave way to new forms of social organization. But in Chiapas, especially in the highlands, a definitely marginal area in terms of national development, very few large scale changes have been introduced, and most of them have been rapidly assimilated into the local structure, rather than transforming it.

The rights over land given to the villages by the Spaniards

T M 175 423 621 The rights over land given to the villages by the Spaniards were not contested by the Mexican Government, but during the last century there have been some redistributions of the boundaries to better fit changes in the size of the population of the different villages in the area. Besides, although it was not legally approved, large chunks of the territory of the communities were taken away by the local ranchers who had the backing of the state politicians. As a result of the land invasion by the ranchers, the villages of Amatenango and Aguacatenango controlled, until recently in this century, very little land, mostly *temporal*, the better land being in the hands of the local *ladino* ranchers.

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T 175 423 M 669 423 After the Mexican Revolution of the twenties, the *fincas* (ranches) were expropriated by the national government, according to new policies of agrarian reform, and under the presidential regime of Avila Camacho were returned to the villages as *Ejidos* (cooperatively owned land).

T 621 423 311 The territory of the villages is divided today, by use, into land for agriculture (*?ulabal* [irrigated], *pomúltik* [hot-country] and *temporal*), land for residential sites, and land for lumbering and pasture. Within the communities the over-all authority that controls land is the *Ayuntamiento*, the body which forms the civil branch of the civil-religious government that is the ultimate authority in village affairs. The *Ayuntamiento* controls both the communal lands and the *Ejido* lands.

T 621 423

T 423 621 The *Ejidos* function very much like the communal lands, in that they are "owned" by the community. Every household head is a member of the *ejido* cooperative, and has rights to cultivate a parcel within the *ejido*. According to the Mexican Agrarian Code,

423 recent grants of land, and also because the whole region of
621 Amatenango and Aguacatenango has less population pressure than the overpopulated Chamula area.

Membership

621 In the social dimension, one of the basic features of the corporate communities of Amatenango and Aguacatenango is their criteria for membership: to become a member of Amatenango of Aguacatenango one has to be born in the village, or marry a village member.

Contractual membership, although rare, may occur, and has, but only for Indians, and with concensual acceptance by the whole [166] community. When the nearby fincas were closed after the Mexican [175] Revolution, some of the Indian peones attached to them asked for and obtained land from Amatenango and Aguacatenango and became full members of these communities with the same rights and duties as any other community member. Although people can indicate who is a member of a new or old family, this distinction tends to be forgotten, even by the families themselves, after the next generation has been born and married into the village.

628 A man from another Indian community may receive an agri-
621 cultural plot if he makes a petition to the Ayuntamiento, is willing
423 to pay the ejido taxes and the limosna (tax levied against the
[651] household heads to support the expenses of celebration of village holidays) and a small payment to the Ayuntamiento (20 pesos) for handling his case. Even then, he has to bring witnesses to testify